

## Esther Upstaged By Klezmer At Megillah Madness '94

Clara pulled it off (not her wig!) at Purim. When Nathan Robinson asked me to portray "Madge" in "Fried Green Hamentaschen" at Megillah Madness '92, I never thought I would find myself organizing Megillah Madness '94. Since I'd had such a great experience in '92, I wanted to combine the elements of song and dance together at Purim. Devra Noily and Jonathan Comisar were rehearsing the newly-formed Klezmer band, and Ellen Goldstein was such a hit at the Brotherhood's Pumpkin dance: I knew this combination would be a success that night. Her story, Esther's coming out, and Purim wouldn't have been as memorable without the following persons' help.

After Robin Leonard and Carolyn Pines offered names of volunteers, I got started. Lea Salem was incredibly intuitive, being one step ahead of me and taking care of the megillot. Without her uncanny ability to sense my uncertainty, I could not have kept my wig on. Likewise, Larry (the janitor) was the sweetest person, who unselfishly asked to set up the sanctuary and kitchen during the day.

That night, with Josh Lee and Rabbi Kahn's interpretative reading of the Megillah, the text came to life. During the reading, Debbi Jacobs-Levine and Leo Solodukha tantalized their tastebuds tasting Hamentaschen. The winners of

the Hamentaschen Bake-off were:

**Most Creative:** *Babytaschen*, by Rebecca and Judith Cohen

**Most Tawdry:** *Amoundataschen*, by Geoff Benjamin

**Most Tasty:** *Robert Bruce*, by Bob Guterma.

(Judges' note: There was a wonderful entry worth mentioning — *Hymen-taschen* and *Vulvataschen* — by Sylvia Weisenberg and Lisa Geduldig.) And Michael Chertok and Paul Cohen baked Hamentaschen for the masses for which the hungry masses were also grateful.

At the last minute, Geoff Benjamin stepped in to provide child care. In the vestibule, Joe Hample (aka *Haman* — *boo!* —) asked for donations and handed out groggers, with Sara Haber providing relief. Bobbi McGhee graciously asked to help in the kitchen, taking tickets and serving beverages.

Sydney Levy, the new program coordinator, helped make a program for the Klezmembers. Thanks again to directors Devra Noily and Jonathan Comisar, and to all the instrumentalists: Gene Eichenbaum, Michael Gitt, Simon Glinksky, Ora Prochovnick, Ellie Cohen, Ellen Giersen, Melinda Basker, Judy Graboyes, and Sharma Gaponoff.

Sydney and Lea provided their exper-

*Continued on page 10*

## Rabbi to Present Shabbat Evening Liturgy Class

Rabbi Yoel Kahn will teach a three-session series about the Friday evening service during April. This class is for people who would like to become service leaders and for anyone who would like to learn more about the structure, history and significance of our liturgy.

The class will cover the history and structure of the traditional Friday night liturgy, the origins and development of our *minhag* or rite at Sha'ar Zahav, and show how services are planned and led. A special additional session will teach the basic music used at CSZ on Shabbat evenings.

Class will meet on Tuesday evenings, April 12, 19 and 26, from 7:30 to 9:30 pm. It is open to everyone, but is especially intended for CSZ members who would like to become service leaders. If you would like to sign up, or have any questions, please call the synagogue office.

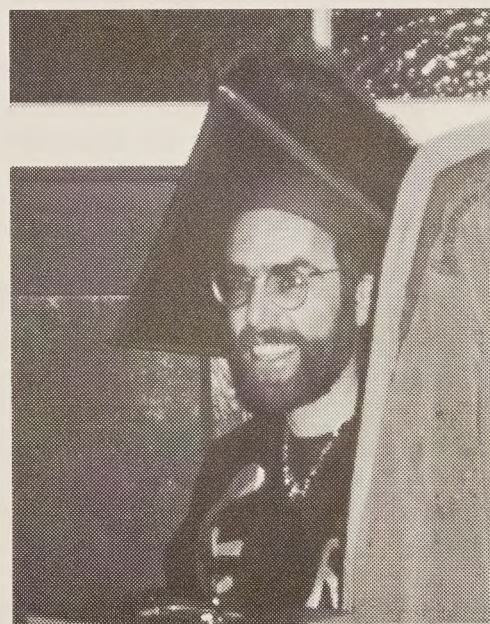
In conjunction with this class, Friday evening, April 8, will be a learning service. As part of our regular Shabbat worship, the sections and themes of the service and its customs which we usually just do will be discussed and explained.



Clara Nett with clarinet. PHOTO BY REINERES SUSBILLA.

## Thanks To The Purim Visionary

Megillah Madness, the CSZ Purim party on February 24, attracted an enormous turnout. The program was dazzling, featuring ritual, music, dancing, refreshments, costumes, and prizes. Many thanks to everyone involved, especially to coordinator Ivan Vincente, who put the event together on extremely short notice. His organizational talents and witty personality made the evening a delight for all.



Joe Hample (aka Hamentaschen). PHOTO BY REINERES SUSBILLA.



## CSZ: The Next Generation

Last month in this column I talked about our tremendous growth, and our need for a new building to accommodate that growth. This month I want to address a slightly more intangible aspect of our growth, and the emotional accommodations we need to make in response. This month's topic, in short, is children at services.

As you probably all know, the number of children in our membership has increased dramatically over the past five or six years. To repeat a statistic noted last month, we have 100 child members, almost half of whom are under the age of six. In other words, about 17% of our members are children, and 8% of our members are five and under.

Not surprisingly, some of those children have begun to come to services, both on Saturday morning and on Friday night. Also not surprisingly, some of them make noise, and some adults find that noise distracting. What to do?

I want to try to see this dilemma from several perspectives. I ask to you read what follows with an open mind, and try really to hear all of these different perspectives.

Each denomination and sub-denomination of Judaism has a particular culture of services: what atmosphere is considered appropriate at services. In the Conservative tradition, the congregation starts most prayers at the same time, but does not sing in the same key or at the same pace, so the overall effect is a pleasant cacophony. The Orthodox tradition involves a similar cacophony

but also involves much discussion and visiting in the aisles as (to borrow from Paul Cohen's recent memorable sermon) the Rabbi pounds on the prayer desk repeatedly and calls for order. Both Orthodox and Conservative congregations often have young children (at least young male children) present at services, adding to the general hubbub.

High Reform congregations, by contrast, take much from American Christianity, and often strive for singing together (at the same time and in the same key) and for a solemn silence other than the "official" sounds coming from the bimah. Children in these congregations are often sent to separate children's services.

Dramatic cacophony, modified cacophony, solemn silence: none of these is the only right way; each one of them represents a different tradition and culture.

So where are we on this spectrum? Our membership is a religiously diverse lot. Members of other synagogues tend to be people who grew up with similar styles of worship and community. By contrast, our synagogue attracts members largely on the basis of its policy of openness. We have many members who would otherwise belong to Conservative, Orthodox, or high Reform synagogues, if not for the fact that they wish to belong to a congregation that particularly welcomes gay men, lesbians and bisexuals. Thus, we are always juggling to make all of us feel at home. We are a Reform synagogue, but much of what we do represents a unique blend of various traditions, many of our own making. On this question of children at services, then, we need to fashion our own answers to this problem just as we

have in other areas.

Some adults find children at services, and the noises they make, charming. They find the presence of children (both physical and audible) increases their sense of community and continuity, and therefore their sense of spirituality.

Others, however, find children disruptive. Particularly for those who look for solemn silence as an expression of, and source of, spiritual renewal, the noises children make at services can feel disruptive. The adult is standing quietly for the Amidah, moving into quiet reflection, successfully screening out the occasional cough or page turn in an otherwise quiet congregation, when the silence is pierced by a shriek, or a loud "But I don't want my diaper changed!" The mood is shattered; the spiritual feeling is gone.

Not only that, but some adults feel parents are too slow to remove their noisy children. It's all very well to have children at services, but why don't parents take them out when they start making noise?

The parent's perspective, not surprisingly, is somewhat different. Many parents bring young children to services because it is an important part of Jewish parenting to pass on a love of our ritual and our community to our children. Children learn by watching and by doing, and by our example. Much criticism has been leveled at parents who never bother to attend services themselves, but dispatch their children off to Hebrew school once a week. Bringing a child to services regularly lets him or her see how moving and important ritual and religion can be, as well as help him or her learn it. Those of us who have had

*Continued on page 9*



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## Creating Liturgy

Writing new prayers is a challenging task. The urge to compose emerges from our desire to have the liturgy hold and reflect back to us our own understanding of God and the innermost yearnings of our hearts. Yet liturgy is inherently conservative; part of the reason it speaks to us is precisely because it has so often been sanctified through its use by generations of our people.



Rabbi Yoel Kahn

One style of liturgical creation which has been used often in Jewish history is to adapt an older form; the opening words or structure, which remind us of the rich history of the prayer or text, are preserved, and the writer gives new life to the old form by personalizing the text through the use of her or his own voice and experience.

There are many examples of this type of liturgical innovation in our prayer-

books at CSZ: the Mi sheberech prayer for those who are ill and the pre-Kaddish reading about our gay and lesbian martyrs are both Sha'ar Zahavian interpretations of older texts. When a new text has been around for a while, the community may forget that it ever was new and eventually a new reading of the new-old reading will appear. Sometimes the new interpretation feels just right to the community and quickly supplants the original, but sometimes the older version is too strongly rooted in the community's loyalty and memory to be set aside. At Sha'ar Zahav, we often use different melodies, translations and interpretations of the same prayer in an effort to summon up the richness of our liturgical tradition and to give voice to a variety of images, teachers and texts.

One traditional type of interpretative prayer is the *piyyut* [pl., *piyyutim*]. *Piyyutim* are liturgical poems which were often inserted into the liturgy in the middle of the fixed texts. Often, the *piyyut* would be written in the form of

an acrostic, using the alphabet or perhaps the author's name (the first letter of the nine verses of Lecha Dodi spell the author's name, Sh'lomo Ha-Levi). In the Shabbat morning service, there is a well-known *piyyut* called *El Adon*. It is an elaboration of the Yotzer Or prayer, which praises the Source of Life as the creator of light, darkness and all living things. *El Adon* describes God's presence in nature in an alphabetical acrostic, starting with Aleph and ending in Tav. An original English translation, from A-Z, was composed at CSZ many years ago.

At our Bar/Bat Mitzvah Shabbaton earlier this year, our Kadimah bar/bat mitzvah students and their parents composed original translations, inspired by the traditional Hebrew *El Adon* and CSZ's old translation. These examples of liturgical creativity — and their authors too — are new links in the chain of Jewish spirituality. I am sure you will find them as exciting, fun and inspirational as I did.

See Yotzer Or acrostics on page 10

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## Shabbat Dinner for People with HIV/AIDS

CSZ's next bimonthly Shabbat dinner for CSZ members living with HIV will be on Friday, April 22, at 6 pm. If you are living with HIV, or are the partner of a person with HIV, please join us for kiddush, candles, shmoozing and a catered Shabbat meal.

The dinner will be hosted by a CSZ member at his home. Everyone is invited to attend Shabbat services at CSZ following the dinner. Please RSVP to the synagogue office by April 19 if you plan to attend.

The Shabbat dinners alternate with our bimonthly spiritual support group meetings. If you would like to be on a confidential mailing list for CSZ's outreach activities for people living with HIV, please call Rabbi Kahn at the synagogue office.

Partners of people with HIV are also welcome at our programs. During the Rabbi's summer sabbatical, CSZ's Program Coordinator, Sydney Levy, will be coordinating our HIV outreach activities.



## What is the Omer? Why Count It?

Toward the end of the traditional haggadah, after the closing prayer of the seder, is a cryptic blessing: Blessed are you, our Eternal God, Ruler of the Universe, who ...has given us the mitzvah of counting the Omer. This is followed by the declaration: This is the first day of the Omer.

Traditional Jews say the same blessing, followed by the declaration, every day from the beginning of Pesach until Shavuot. The Torah twice insists that "thou shalt" count the forty-nine days. So what is an omer?

An omer is a sheaf, or measure of grain. Originally, the fifty-day period measured the time between the barley harvest and the wheat harvest. In the Jewish ritual year, it extends from the day our ancestors left Egypt to the day they received the Torah; from the day they became a free people until the day they possessed a plan to organize themselves. Counting the omer once let farmers know when they could expect their crops to ripen. Now it extends the celebration of Pesach to Shavuot. Or it should extend the celebration. But instead the Omer is a time of semi-mourning. Why?

The answer is hidden, spoken only in code, hinted at early in the seder. The haggadah mentions five rabbis who told the story of the going forth from Egypt all night at B'nei Brak, until their students told them it was time for morning prayers. Why did their students need to tell them it was morning? Were they hidden so far from the sun that they never saw the sky lighten? Were they meeting in a cave or cellar, concealed from the Roman state, talking about their own generation, their own liberation?

Rabbi Akiva was at B'nei Brak that night. The Talmud tells us that the Omer is a time of mourning because, during the Omer, Rabbi Akiva's 24,000 students died of a plague, sent by God to punish them for not respecting each other. Yet Rabbi Akiva himself didn't die in a plague: he was tortured to death by the Roman Empire, after supporting the failed Bar-Kochba revolt.

Another mystery: Why does the Talmud tell us to mourn Rabbi Akiva's students for seven weeks, but not Rabbi Akiva himself? Was it because he supported the false messiah Bar-Kochba? It was Akiva who convinced the other

leaders of his generation that Bar-Kochba was destined to defeat the Roman empire, establish a Jewish state, and rebuild the temple. The Jews rose against Rome, and held out for six years. When the Romans won at last, at great cost, they slaughtered the people of Judea, murdered its leaders, razed its cities, and outlawed the Jewish religion. Were Akiva's "students" really those who learned from him to fight for Bar-Kochba — were they the defeated, destroyed, Jewish nation?

But Akiva broke with Bar-Kochba before the military defeat. During the last year of the war, with his army under siege by the Romans, Bar-Kochba came to distrust, and finally kill, a rabbi who supported him. This showed he had lost respect for the leaders who once had united the people behind him — and the rabbis lost respect for him. Maybe this is the meaning of the Talmud's mysterious phrase: "They didn't show proper respect for one another."

Akiva and the other rabbis knew they had staked their lives, and their people's lives, on a doomed cause. Fear and hope had deluded them, and they had trusted a leader who turned on his followers, who led their generation to disaster. Some scholars think most of the Jews in Judea died in the war — and in the massacres that followed. How could the survivors not institute mourning? But how, with Roman power restored, could they be honest about why they mourned? By a process we can no longer reconstruct, the revolt turned into a plague, the army into students. Only the mourning remained unchanged.

Rabbi Akiva survived Bar-Kochba. The Roman government condemned the Jewish religion as a source of rebellion

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### Anniversaries

- |    |                               |
|----|-------------------------------|
| 10 | Carolyn Pines & Judy Schwartz |
| 13 | Jane Graeven & Mark Graeven   |
| 21 | Rena Frantz & Ora Prochovnick |
| 22 | David Israels & William Salit |
| 25 | Steve Davis & Terry O'Hara    |

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

and made teaching it a capital crime. Akiva could have retired into private life in his old age. But he kept teaching Judaism. It was for this that he was martyred.

How, after being so wrong, did Rabbi Akiva dare to set himself up as a leader for the future? Even stranger: Why did people follow him? Each mystery of the Omer hides another, until this one, the deepest mystery: Why didn't Jewish history end then and there?

Were our ancestors just too stubborn to quit living as Jews? Did the Romans' example of cruelty convince them that the Jews had a mission, to preserve at least the possibility of a humane way of life? Did the God who strengthened Pharaoh's will for evil also strengthen theirs for good?

Akiva and his surviving students were stubborn, but also flexible. Had Akiva been stubborn in supporting Bar-Kochba, military defeat would have crushed him. With national independence postponed into the unimaginable future, the Jews needed to learn how to live as a people without a country. They needed to recreate their way of life, their identity. The Talmud credits Akiva with rescuing the Torah by interpreting it for a new age. How can anyone have been that stubborn, that flexible, that resilient? Imagination breaks down, leaving awe.

Kabbalistic legend reflects this awe: it tells of four rabbis who attained visions of the Divine Throne; among them, only Akiva entered in peace and departed in peace.

Counting the Omer can teach us many things. It can remind us that crops take time to ripen, that we all depend on nature for life. It can remind us that history takes time to unfold, that the first burst of freedom can't be sustained, that a people needs structure to survive; after escaping from Egypt we have to come to Sinai. Counting the Omer can teach us to be cautious in supporting any leader, pursuing any means of struggle; but also to risk acting, even when we might be terribly wrong. It can teach us how to survive being wrong. Counting day after day teaches the value, and the possibility, of working steadily toward a better future.

—Nina Wouk, for the Ritual Committee  
(with great thanks to Pinchas Stopler)



## Parents' Meeting: Creating a Children's Concerns Committee

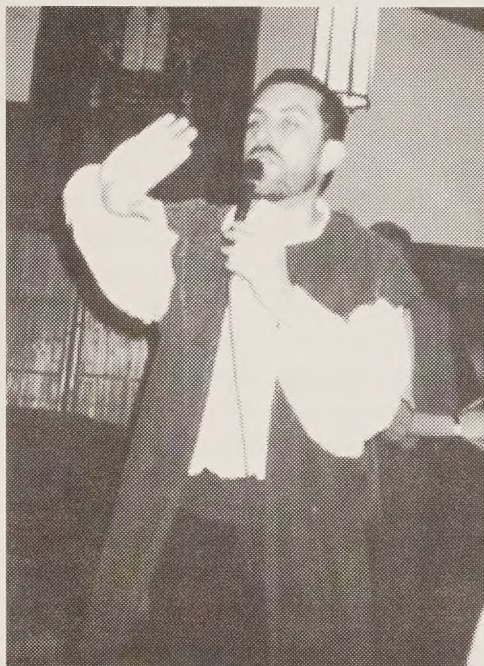
A recent count delighted and challenged us as we realized that there are approximately 100 children amongst the member families of our congregation. Children's activities at the synagogue have been planned by a number of ad hoc groups over the years; over the last several years, the Children's Education Committee has taken the lead in planning children's programs for the entire congregation. As our Kadimah grows, and as there are an ever-larger number of younger and older children, we are now trying to establish a new committee that will set policy and help organize a broad spectrum of children's activities at Sha'ar Zahav.

An informal organizing meeting for our new Children's Concerns Committee will be held on Saturday morning, April 16, 10 to 11:30, at the home of Ron Lezell, 61 Eagle Street (around the corner from the synagogue). Parents and non-parents alike are invited to this informal gathering. Children are welcome. Please join us!

## March Va'ad Report

Much of the March 14 Va'ad Meeting was devoted to a thorough examination of the congregation's proposed budget. However, a number of other topics were discussed over the course of the evening.

The meeting opened with Rabbi Kahn



Nathan Robinson takes charge. PHOTO BY  
SAM THAL.

leading a D'var Torah in which he discussed how the miracles of Passover should serve to focus our attention on the ways in which we enjoy our freedom. We should always strive to be conscious of those miracles and the freedoms which resulted from them.

Lea Salem's office report featured a recommendation that we purchase a photocopier to replace the one we currently use. This would save money now spent on outside printing jobs that our own copier can't accommodate. A motion was made and passed.

Ron Wilmot, appearing on behalf of the Building Renovations Committee, presented us with two bids to renovate the bimah area of the sanctuary. This would create space for an additional 36 seats. The Va'ad gave its approval for the work to begin. The Building Fund will be the source of the money for this project.

The Membership Committee, represented by Carolyn Pines, recommended two people for membership. The Va'ad voted its approval.

Before launching into a full-scale budget examination, we looked at the question of how much money should be kept in financial reserves. After some discussion, the Va'ad voted that it would be CSZ policy to maintain financial reserves equal to three months' expenses.

The remainder of the evening was devoted to examining the proposed budget, which, at almost 150 lines, was no small task for us. Under the bylaws, the proposed budget must be approved twice by the Va'ad and sent to the membership before it can be officially presented to the Congregation at the Annual Meeting.

At 10 pm, the Va'ad gratefully adjourned with a dreamlike rendition of Oseh Shalom.

—Mark Mackler, Recorder

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## CSZ Author Reads From His Work

CSZ Member Yehuda Hyman will be reading at A Different Light Bookstore on Sunday, April 17, at 7:30 pm. Yehuda was commissioned by the Mark Taper Forum to write *The Mad Dancers*. He will read from this, as well as selections from his poetry and short stories. Call for more information (431-0891).



## Stars of David

This series of music, dance, and theatre brings together a mix of Jewish artists standing together in support for the former Yugoslavia. Performing will be musicians, choreographers, monologists, and improvisors. Some address Judaism explicitly, others are not at all tied to Jewish content. Despite these differences, does a certain sensibility or consciousness underlie works by Jewish artists? And if so, does that commonality define this group as a community of Jewish performers here in the Bay Area? This showcase is creating a forum where these questions can be pursued.

Funds raised by Stars of David benefit the Women To Women project, a three-week working tour of the former Yugoslavia, Croatia, Serbia, and hopefully, Bosnia-Herzegovina by a team of American women performers and artists, led by Fran Peavey and CSZ member Tova Green.

Featured performers include:

**April 8 and 9:** Naomi Newman, Remy Charlip, Ruth Zaporah, Joel ben Izzy (Saturday only), CSZ member Sara Felder, Debbie Taylor (Friday only), Rachel Kaplan, Post Modern Members of the Tribe, Mark Landsman, Jamie Berger, and Joanne Nerenberg.

**April 15 and 16:** Josh Kornbluth, Ben Goldberg Group, Nina Wise, Kate Bornstein, Harvey Stein, Vocotot (including CSZ music consultant Linda Hirschhorn), Golem Works (Ellie Herman), Nesting Dolls, Stephen Pelton and Co., and Linda Carr.

Performances include house band Steve Horowitz and the Code (All Babushka Ensemble) and lobby art by Charles Goldman. All performances will be at the New Performance Gallery, 3183 17th Street, San Francisco, 8 pm. Sliding scale \$12-\$25, but no one turned away for lack of funds. For more information, call Joanne Nerenberg (550-2496).

## Help Plan the Jewish Women's Conference

A planning meeting for the second Jewish Women's Conference will be held on April 6, 6:30-8 pm, at the UC Laurel Heights Campus, Chancellor's room, 3333 California Street (across from Walnut Street and the JCCSF). Parking costs 85¢. Remember the inspiration of the Bay Area Jewish Women's Conference, *Women As A Force For Social Change* (Golden Gate University - March 1, 1992)? If you are like the many Bay Area Jewish women who would like to see it happen again, come and be a part of the planning process!!! This is your conference — be a voice in deciding the theme of the conference and other features. Let's make it happen!! If you are not able to attend on April 6 and would like to be a part of the process, or have questions, please telephone Marriam Cramer Ring (826-5390).

## Speakers Bureau In Motion

Congregation Sha'ar Zahav is joining forces with Community United Against Violence (CUAV) to conduct presentations on lesbian/gay/bi issues to Jewish agencies in the Bay Area. To kick off the effort, a three-hour training will be conducted by Rabbi Kahn and CSZ member Sylvia Weisenberg. Volunteers who attend the training will be equipped to present hour-long sessions in the Jewish community aimed at dispelling myths and breaking stereotypes about gay and lesbian Jews.

The training will be Monday, April 25, 6:30 to 9:30 pm at Sha'ar Zahav. Please bring your dinner; drinks and dessert will be served. To apply, please contact Sylvia at CUAV (777-5500).

## Oneg Sponsors

These generous people sponsored onegs during the month of March:

3/4 **CSZ Brotherhood.**

3/11 **Susan Greenspan**, to commemorate the yahrzeit of Neill Rosen.

3/18 **Lane Schickler**, in honor of his parents' visit.

3/25 **Nancy Meyer & Marilyn O'Keeffe**, in honor of the naming of Daniel Neill Meyer-O'Keeffe.

## New York Pride Shabbat

This June marks the 25th anniversary of Stonewall. New York City will host the very large celebration on Sunday, June 26. Congregation Beth Simchat Torah, our sibling congregation in New York, will hold its traditional Gay Pride Shabbat service on Friday, June 24/15 Tammuz at 8 pm. Sharon Kleinbaum, rabbi of CBST, has personally invited members of Sha'ar Zahav to join with CBST that night.

It is only appropriate that we gather as Jews in the sanctuary of a synagogue to mark such a significant event in history. Please know that you are welcome to join with our New York friends that night in prayer and song. The address is 57 Bethune Street, New York, NY 10014 (212/929-9498).

Alex Rader

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**1** Friday  
20 Nisan  
**Passover**  
• 8:15pm, Shabbat service, Linda Hirschhorn. Shabbat singalong following services.

**2** Saturday  
21 Nisan  
**Passover**  
• No Kadimah  
• 10:30am, Passover Shabbat and Yizkor service

**3** Sunday  
22 Nisan  
**Passover**

**4** Monday  
23 Nisan  
• 6:30pm, Healing Service

**5** Tuesday  
24 Nisan  
• 7pm, Dues Committee  
• 7:15pm, Introduction to Prayerbook Hebrew 1B  
• 8:30pm, Modern Jewish Philosophies

**6** Wednesday  
25 Nisan  
• 6:30pm, Planning meeting for Jewish Women's Conference, 3333 California St.

**7** Thursday  
26 Nisan

**8** Friday  
27 Nisan  
• 8:15pm, Shabbat service, aufruf for Carolyn Pines and Judy Schwartz. Shabbat learning service, themes and customs explained.

**9** Saturday  
28 Nisan  
• 9:30am, Kadimah  
• 10:30am, Shabbat service and Bat Mitzvah of Ma'ayan Lieberman

**10** Sunday  
29 Nisan

**11** Monday  
30 Nisan  
• 6:30pm, Va'ad meeting

**12** Tuesday  
1 Iyyar  
• 7:15pm, Introduction to Prayerbook Hebrew 1B  
• 7:30pm, How to Lead a Service  
• 8:30pm, Modern Jewish Philosophies

**13** Wednesday  
2 Iyyar  
• 7pm, Newsletter editing

**14** Thursday  
3 Iyyar  
• 7pm, Children's Education meeting

**15** Friday  
4 Iyyar  
• 8:15pm, Shabbat service

**16** Saturday  
5 Iyyar  
• 9:30am, Kadimah  
• 10am, Children's Concerns Committee, 61 Eagle Street

**17** Sunday  
6 Iyyar  
• Noon, Israel Independence Day Festival, Union Square

**18** Monday  
7 Iyyar  
• 6 pm, Healing service  
• 7 pm, Newsletter proofreading and layout

**19** Tuesday  
8 Iyyar  
• 7:15pm, Introduction to Prayerbook Hebrew 1B  
• 7:30pm, How to Lead a Service  
• 8:30pm, Modern Jewish Philosophies

**20** Wednesday  
9 Iyyar

**21** Thursday  
10 Iyyar  
• 7 pm, Bikkur Cholim

**22** Friday  
11 Iyyar  
• 6pm, Dinner for people with HIV/AIDS and their partners  
• 8:15pm, Shabbat service

**23** Saturday  
12 Iyyar  
• 9:30am, Kadimah

**24** Sunday  
13 Iyyar  
• 10:30am, Kaiser Brunch

**25** Monday  
14 Iyyar  
• 6:30pm, CUA/CSZ Speakers' Training

**26** Tuesday  
15 Iyyar  
• 7:15pm, Introduction to Prayerbook Hebrew 1B  
• 7:30pm, How to Lead a Service  
• 8:30pm, Modern Jewish Philosophies

**27** Wednesday  
16 Iyyar  
• 7pm, Membership Committee and Task Force on Role of Non-Jew in the synagogue

**28** Thursday  
17 Iyyar  
• 5pm, Laney Pollikoff, Naming ceremony  
• 6:30pm, Ritual Committee  
• 7pm, Newsletter distribution

**29** Friday  
18 Iyyar  
• 8:15 pm, Shabbat service

**30** Saturday  
19 Iyyar  
• 9:30am, Kadimah

**Note: Gray areas indicate religious services.**

## MAY FORWARD DEADLINES

### FOR ADVERTISING MONDAY, APRIL 4

To place a display ad, call Barney Ugarte (386-2472).

To place a classified ad, call the office.

### FOR ARTICLES MONDAY, APRIL 11

Write us an article! Type it *double spaced*, write "Attr: Gaily Forward" on top, and mail or fax (861-6081) to CSZ. If possible, submit it on disk too: this will help keep our costs down. *No deadline extensions without advance permission from the newsletter chair* (621-7675).

## East Bay Services

4/15 Gordon Osser's, 796 Sunset Blvd., Hayward. Call about dinner: 510/886-9440

5/20 Judy Schwartz and Carolyn Pines', 2821 55th Ave., Oakland, 510/532-9661





## Birthdays

- 1 Barney Ugarte
- 3 Rachel Katz
- 4 Linda Michels
- 5 Heather Fox
- 7 Judy Macks
- 7 Gordon Osser
- 10 Jared Goldfine
- 12 Kathy Simon
- 12 Devra Noily
- 13 Arthur Brendze
- 13 Richard Goldwasser
- 14 Lyssa Friedman
- 15 Susan Stahl
- 16 Robert Gordon
- 16 Jeanette Nichols
- 17 Diana Buchbinder
- 19 Alita Rosenfeld
- 19 Martin Spector
- 19 Sandy Meyers
- 20 Bill Ashley-Dobbin
- 20 Leonard Brill
- 23 Eli Weinstein
- 23 Sara Haber
- 24 Susan Fraimow-Wong
- 25 Brian Ellis
- 26 Fran Kipnis
- 26 Andre Fournier
- 26 Sarah Comerchero
- 27 Judith Rosenberg
- 27 Bruce Friedman
- 29 Shirley Liberman
- 30 Judith Klain



## New Members

The Membership Committee is pleased to announce that our congregation gained the following new members this month. A warm welcome to the latest people to join our family:

**Jerry Axeline**

**Richard Meyerson**

We are grateful to see our congregation grow. It is up to all of us to help our new members feel welcome as they become active participants in our community.

## Synagogue Information

**Rabbi Yoel Kahn** (861-6932)

### Officers:

*President*, Tiela Chalmers (431-4312)  
*Administrative Vice President*,  
 David Stein (863-4769)  
*Program Vice President*,  
 Nathan Robinson  
*Treasurer*, Gary Sokol  
*Recorder*, Mark Mackler

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 Daniel Chesir  
 Ida Kuluk  
 Ron Lezell  
 Carolyn Pines  
 Ora Prochovnick  
 Lane Schickler  
 Susan Tubbesing

### Office Personnel:

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*Rabbi's Secretary*, David Couch  
*Program Coordinator*, Sydney Levy

### Committee Chairs:

*Archivist*, Bill Ashley-Dobbin and  
 Bill Goldstein  
*Bequests and Donations*, Richard  
 Inlander  
*Bikkur Cholim*, David Shaber  
*Brotherhood*, Barney Ugarte  
*Building*, Ellen Giersen  
*Bylaws*, Edward Pollock  
*Cemetery*, Richard Inlander  
*Children's Chavurah*, Audrey Adelson  
 and Joan Lefkowitz  
*Cookbook Project*, Robin Leonard  
*Dues*, Lisa Katz and Roz Fuerman  
*Education*, open  
*Endowment Fund*, Richard Inlander

*Finance*, Brett Trueman  
*Fine Arts*, Alice Prussin  
*Fundraising*, Michael Zimmerman and  
 Ellie Cohen  
*Gift Shop*, Jeff Rubin  
*Israel Chavurah*, Ron Lezell  
*Leadership Development*, Irene Ogus  
*Long-Range Planning*, Allan Gold  
*Membership*, Carolyn Pines  
*Newsletter*, Joe Hample (621-7675)  
*Oneg*, Debbi Jacobs-Levine  
*Past Presidents Council*, Don Albert  
*Personnel*, David Stein  
*Public Relations*, Sharyn Saslafsky  
*Religious School*, Trudi Hauptman  
*Ritual*, Frank Yellin  
*Social Action*, open  
*Social Program*, by committee  
*Volunteer Coordinator*, Robin Leonard  
*Women's Chavurah*, Susan Tubbesing

*Members wishing to contact any Va'ad member or committee chair are invited to obtain his or her number from the synagogue office.*

**Office Hours:** Monday–Friday from 9 am to 3 pm. Please call the synagogue office at 861-6932.

**Emergency Number:** In an emergency, the congregation can be contacted outside of office hours by calling 861-6938.

**Bikkur Cholim:** If you or a friend who is a member of Sha'ar Zahav are ill in the hospital or at home, and would like to have the rabbi or a member of the Bikkur Cholim Committee call or visit, please notify the synagogue office.

**Member** of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (Mike Rankin, Robin Leonard, Allyce Kimerling, Liaisons) and of the World Congress of Gay and Lesbian Jewish Organizations (Lane Schickler, Liaison).

**Services** are held every Friday evening beginning at 8:15 pm (except as noted), with an Oneg Shabbat following services. Services are generally held on the second Saturday of each month at 10:30 am—check calendar for each month.

**Gift Shop Hours:** Fridays, 7:30–8:05 pm.

**Library Hours:** Open during office hours, and 30 minutes before and after Friday night services.

**Congregation Sha'ar Zahav** (Congregation of the Golden Gate) is located in the Upper Market District of San Francisco at 220 Danvers at Caselli, which is one block south of the intersection of 18th and Market streets. By public transport, take MUNI bus 33 Stanyan to 18th and Danvers and walk one block south on Danvers to Caselli.



## • VOLLEYBALL •

The Men's Brotherhood and Women's Chavurah invite you to join them for volleyball in the park on April 17 from 11 am to 6 pm. Call Ivan Vincente for details (255-5973).



## President's Column

*Continued from page 2*

the pleasure of being there as our first crop of bar and bat mitzvah students lead services can see firsthand the power of this experience in bringing a child up Jewish. These kids, by and large, began their Jewish learning early.

Each Friday night we say the V'ahavta, including "V'shinantam I'vanecha": "Teach (these words) diligently to your children." These children are our members, and they are our children, our community's children. The responsibility of raising them as part of a warm and welcoming Jewish community rests not just with their parents, but with all of us.

Some synagogues offer regular services geared especially for younger children ("Tot Shabbat" services). We recently celebrated our first such service in recent memory, and will continue to work on presenting more of this type of programming. We just do not have the resources, however, to do it every week. In addition, this type of service meets only some of the needs described above. It is important to some parents that their children see them worshipping as, and with, adults. The message they want to give their children is not, religion is for kids, but that religion can be for everyone, including you when you get to be an adult.

There are two other considerations to be named here. First of all, some parents cannot afford to pay a babysitter to allow them to come to services without their children. Two hours of babysitting can cost \$15 or more: this is more than some parents can afford on a regular

basis. And, some parents feel it important that their children are welcomed into an adult community. That is, after all, a good deal of what a Jewish community provides: a sense of extended family and community for its members. It feels antithetical to that spirit to tell our children that they must confine their participation to separate but equal services.

Consider, too, the child's perspective. Services are stimulating and fun, but sitting still for an hour and a half is more than most adults can accomplish, much less a two-year-old. It can be sweet and very exciting when they get to open the ark, and people beam at them; but when they try to ask questions, or amuse themselves, and they get shushed or glared at, it can feel like an unfriendly place.

Every parent I have spoken to agrees that some limits must be placed on children at services, and that, at a certain point, a disruptive child should be taken out of the sanctuary. The problem lies with identifying when that point has arrived. Some parents, intimidated by what they perceive as hostile glares from non-parents, rush the child out of the room at the slightest happy peep. (And sometimes, the look was not a glare at all but rather a delighted congregant looking to see the source of that cute noise. The parent, seized with anxiety, is so worried that he or she missed that distinction.) Other parents, perhaps injured to the loud noises they hear at home all the time, wait until the noise has reached a level they are uncomfortable with, long after many undeniably

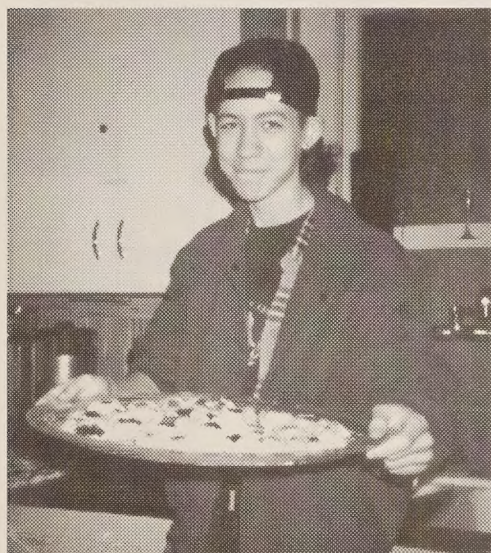
hostile glares have headed their way. In either case, it's hard to know where to take the crying or exuberant child: it's often too cold outside, and the oneg room is filled with plates full of sugar (not the place for an overstressed child). The library is locked during services.

How can we strike a balance in these perspectives? Communicating by glares and beams is not very effective and (in this age of communication and therapy) hardly the standard to which we should aspire. Banning children altogether, or tolerating only silent children, is not a fair compromise; neither is allowing children to run up and down or chatter loudly during services. Here, therefore, is a compromise I believe we can, and should, live with happily.

We welcome children to our services. Their happy noises, inquiring noises, singing-along noises — even their complaining noises are all welcome in small measure. Their occasional questions are entirely appropriate: it would be good if we all wondered why we stand for the Shema, why we cover our eyes while blessing the candles, or why only some people wear Shabbat hats.

Loud noises, running, and jumping during the service are not appropriate, and children (or, come to think of it, adults) who are doing those things need to be taken out of the sanctuary. We will make the library accessible to parents in that situation, and we will have our toy collection out and available there for those kids. An adult will, of course, need to remain with the child in the library.

*Continued on page 11*



*Hamantaschen, anyone? Ethan Frazin selling the goodies. PHOTO BY TRUDI HAUPTMAN.*

### Israel Bound?

The Annual Board Meeting of the World Congress of Gay and Lesbian Jewish Organizations will be in Israel on June 1 and 2, in conjunction with the European-Israeli Regional Conference of Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Jews.

If you'll be in Israel and would like to represent CSZ at the meeting (whether or not you plan to attend the conference), please call Robin Leonard (386-7876) or Lane Schickler (255-9679).



*Clara Nett (oops, that's Ivan Vincente) and Stephan Howard. PHOTO BY SAM THAL.*



## Religious School's Yotzer Or Acrostics

A nimals are abundant  
 B irds fly above  
 C reatures of every form  
 D ogs and cats are everywhere  
 E ating each other in the cycles of the universe  
 F ree to roam, fly and swim  
 G erms turn life to fertile ground  
 H elping the cycles of incarnation  
 I ndigo skies at twilight  
 J asmine-scented flowers mark our paths  
 K eeping us aware of the universal plan  
 L icken breaking even giant boulders to dust  
 M yrtle and magic surround the forest  
 N othing is what it seems  
 O r so it feels  
 P leasure the fruits of tree and vine  
 Q uiet!  
 R ivers running rapidly roaring  
     rescuing risking  
 S ilence!  
 T here is much to be aware of  
 U nder heaven's sky  
 V iolence and peace  
 W omb of creating  
 X citing to be held  
 Y ellow red blue green the rainbow  
 Z ealous are you, God, our creator

A ll of creation is sacred  
 B eauty is in everything  
 C alling us to worship  
 D aily practice  
 E ach day is special  
 F orever in splendor  
 G lory is the earth  
 H oly is the sky  
 I love life  
 J ustice prevails  
 K nowledge is the light  
 L ife always changes  
 M agnificent in its creation  
 N ature is bountiful  
 O verwhelming is my sense for all  
 P anoramic views  
 Q uestion authority  
 R ainbows surround us  
 S pectrum of colors  
 T hankful are we  
 U nderstanding  
 V enturing into our planet  
 W ondrous is God's world  
 eX isting forever  
 Y outh bring us innocence  
 Z eal for life

A rdvark eats ants  
 B ees make honey  
 C ats clean claws  
 D ogs do-do  
 E lephants eat  
 F ish float  
 G iraffes graze  
 H orses like hay  
 I guanas climb trees  
 J aguars jump  
 K angaroos kick  
 L lamas leap  
 M ice mate  
 N ature nurtures  
 O striches are overwhelming  
 P andas plod  
 Q uails quack  
 R odents reproduce  
 S nakes slither  
 Turtles trudge  
 U nicorns are unique  
 V ultures are villains  
 W alruses waddle  
 X ylophones are not natural  
 Y aks talk back  
 Z ebras live in zoos

## Megillah Madness

*Continued from page 1*

tise to determine the costume winners:

**Most Histrionic:** Ron Lezell.

**Most Hysterical:** Tsipora Prochovnick.

**Most Historical:** Joe Hample.

(Note: Joe's partner spent so much time hand-making his costume, he didn't have time to make one for himself. Bravo, Reineres!)

Without Nathan Robinson and Ellen Goldstein as the Israeli folk dance instructors, the night could not have lasted as long as it did. The sound equipment for the dancing was provided by Phil Charney, while Jim and Ethan Frazin took snapshots of the madness.

Lastly, the Men's Brotherhood supported me during the month of preparation. My good friend and housemate Lane Schickler's encouragement and helpful guidance (and fashion tips) made me feel more sure about making the Madness more memorable.

Thanks to the whole fruity bunch from the bottom of my silver sequined slippers.

— Clara Nett (aka Ivan Vincente)



Rose Katz leads the group in Israeli folk dancing. Photo by Sam Thal.



## Gay, Male and Formerly Orthodox?

### Social Scientist Wants You

Jeff Bernhardt, a member of the Los Angeles gay and Jewish communities and a student at Hebrew Union College and U.S.C., is doing research for his master's thesis. The subject is how gay men who grew up in Orthodox homes reconcile their gay and their Jewish identities. He is interested in interviewing gay men who grew up in Orthodox

homes and may or may not still identify as Orthodox. If you are a gay man and grew up in an Orthodox home (or know someone who fits this description), please contact Jeff (310/854-5618). This is an opportunity to contribute to a relatively new area of study. All interviews are confidential and anonymous and any costs will be covered by Jeff.

### President's Column

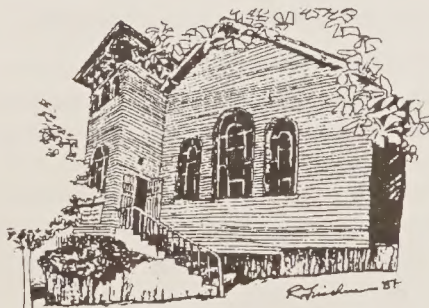
*Continued from page 9*

Every Friday night at services someone is responsible for making announcements. Usually it is either myself, David Stein (the Administrative Vice President) or Nathan Robinson (the Program Vice President); occasionally it is a member of the Va'ad. The greeters will know who the announcer is. The announcer is the one in charge on this question: that person will have the keys to the library, that person will be the one to talk to if you are feeling disturbed or glared at, and, if need be, that person will be the one to approach a parent and suggest that a child probably should go upstairs for a while. We will do our very best to take on this responsibility with awareness of all perspectives and issues, and with respect for all involved.

Being a part of a community always involves compromises, and this circumstance is no exception. It will not always feel quiet enough to some adults; it will not always feel welcoming enough to some parents and children. But part of our Jewish responsibility is to be a community together: to try to understand each other's perspectives, to respect each other's needs. Let us turn our hearts to that task.

*Congregation Sha'ar Zahav*

## Gift Shop



Friday nights, 7:30-8:05 pm

## Women's Bat Mitzvah

CSZ's first adult B'not Mitzvah class, consisting of Tova Green, Rose Katz and Eileen Levy, will be celebrating our call to the Torah at Shabbat morning services on Saturday, May 7 at 10:15 am. Please join us for this special Shabbat service and celebration.

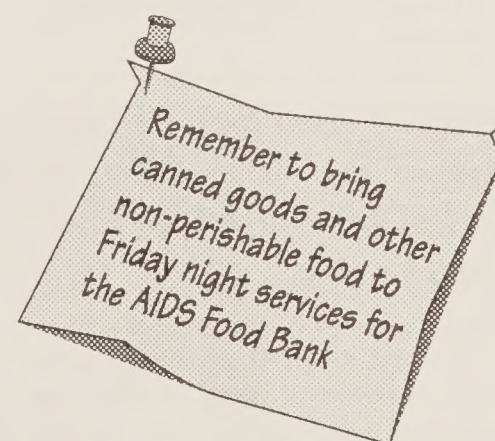
## Naches

To **Allan Gold**, on being named Phoebe Apperson Hearst Outstanding Educator by Reed Union School District in Tiburon as part of a national PTA contest.

To **Matt Levine**, on his new position as Sales Representative in Marin County for Young's Specialty Foods.

To **Stephan Howard**, for receiving an award for outstanding achievement from Irwin Memorial Blood Bank. By participating in a year-long project to improve donor interviews, Stephan helped make the blood supply safer and was called "the conscience of Irwin."

To **Daphne Stuart**, for passing her orals and being licensed as a clinical social worker.



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## Contributions

Sha'ar Zahav welcomes all contributions of all sizes to mark any event and to add to any of our funds. Contributions will be acknowledged in the *Forward* unless otherwise requested.

Donations were made to Sha'ar Zahav's funds in the past months by the following contributors:

### AIDS Fund

**Michelle Dickstein**, in loving memory of her dear friend, Roger Morales.

**Gordon Phillips**, in memory of Adam Garrick Phillips.

**Mike Rankin**, Captain, M.C., U.S.N., in memory of Randy Shilts.

**Mike Rankin**, in memory of Geraldine Minsk Rankin & James Robert Rankin.

### Bikkur Cholim Fund

**Michele Sullivan**, to commemorate the yahrzeit of her mother, Marion LeMeteyer.

### General Fund

**Dana Vinicoff**, in memory of Alan Vinicoff.

**Shirley Liberman & Margaret Livingston**, in honor of Irene Ogus' birthday.

## Shalom, 46! Israel Independence Day Festival

San Francisco's Union Square will resound with the lively sounds of Israeli music on Sunday, April 17 when the community-wide celebration of the 46th anniversary of Israel's statehood is held there for the first time.

The annual festival, which is subtitled "Israel's Hope for Peace," will take place from noon to 3 pm and features a wide variety of spirited music and dancing, children's fun, plenty of delicious food, plus information about local Jewish activities and services.

The celebration is sponsored by the Jewish Community Federation and the Jewish Community Relations Council and co-sponsored, for the first time, by the office of the Mayor. For information, call the Shalom, 46! phone line (512-6203).

**Allan Berenstein**, in honor of Al Radetsky's 80th birthday.

**Leslie Bergson**, in honor of the birth of Daniel Neill Meyer-O'Keeffe.

**Neil Hart**, in appreciation of Sam Yellin.

**Jonathan Funk**, in memory of Mike Kozlewski.

**Allan Berenstein**, in memory of his grandfather, Max Radetsky.

**Barry Siegel**, in honor of Ron Lezell and all his good work.

**David Rosenthal & Jim Gloor**, in honor of the birth of Lindsay Paige Rosenthal.

**Ben Brody**, to commemorate the yahrzeit of Oscar Barron.

*The Jewish Gaily Forward* is published by Congregation Sha'ar Zahav, 220 Danvers at Caselli, San Francisco, California 94114, 861-6932. Permission to reproduce material is freely given, and credit would be appreciated.

Members of the congregation receive the *Forward*. For \$18/year, nonmembers will receive a *Forward* subscription.

### Members of the Newsletter Committee

*Chair:* Joe Hample (621-7675)

*Editing/Proofreading/Layout:* John Bachert, Alison Cohen, Judy Heiman, Stephan Howard, Richard Inlander, Tess Johnson, Betty Kalis, Rose Katz, Stan Kern, Robin Leonard, Martha Moon, Carolyn Pines, Ivan Vincente

*Photography:* Michael Bettinger

*Advertising:* Barney Ugarte

*Distribution:* Alison Cohen, Sara Haber, Lisa Halton, Gordon Osser, Sam Thal, David Weinstein, Eli Weinstein

*Typesetting:* David Lester, Mouse Type Inc.

*Printing:* Genesis Printing & Graphics

**Display Ads** are \$15 per column inch for nonmembers and \$10 per column inch for members, with discounts available for size and frequency. Ads should be camera ready; any ads that require typesetting, camera and/or artwork will be subject to a one-time production charge.

**Classified Ads** are \$5 for up to 20 words, plus \$1 for each 10 additional words. No personals accepted.

Payment must accompany ad and should be sent to Congregation Sha'ar Zahav, 220 Danvers at Caselli, San Francisco, California 94114, marked attention *Forward* advertising. The *Forward* reserves the right to reject any ad for reasons of taste.

**Lance Barshinger**  
**Albert Hill**

*Harvey Milk Social Action Fund*  
**Rabbi Norman Auerback**

*Rabbi's Discretionary Fund*  
**Sherie Koshover & Carol Roseman**, in loving memory of Luna, their devoted companion and soul-mate.

**Dolores Sullivan**, in memory of Jerry Davis.

**Henry Carrey**, in memory of Neil Stansky.

**Peter Barnes & Leyna Berenstein**, in honor of their commitment ceremony.

**Judy Kramer**, in memory of Jerry Davis.

**Richard Grabstein, Harriet Unger, Michael & Anna Grabstein**, in honor of the wedding of Andrea Palash & Diane Hawk.

**Betty Kalis & Marion Trentman**, in honor of Liz Goodman's entering the covenant and in honor of the kiddushin of Carolyn Pines & Judy Schwartz.

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## Classifieds

LOOKING FOR AN OPPORTUNITY to discuss books, plays and films? To exchange your views on art, politics and contemporary culture? Then join writer/educator Susan Sobel-Feldman's on-going discussion group, *The Literati Circle*. This group meets twice a month in Susan's Richmond District townhouse for lively analyses of stories, poetry, essays, plays and whatever else strikes our relevant fancies. There is a suggested donation of \$10 per meeting. For more information, call Susan (668-2272).

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## Sixth Annual Lambda Literary Awards Finalists Named

Many gay men and lesbians find themselves alienated and shunned by the society into which they are born. Yet 1993 saw a torrent of lesbian and gay biographies and autobiographies that captured the attention of the literary establishment, and which makes the Lambda Literary Award Gay and Lesbian Biography/Autobiography categories among this year's strongest.

Whether it's Jean Genet imprisoned in pre-war France, or Marguerite Yourcenar retreating to rustic Maine, Reinaldo Arenas hiding in Castro's Cuba or Lillian Smith fighting racial injustice in rural Georgia, Lars Eighner living on the streets in contemporary Austin, Texas or Jewelle Gomez growing up in segregated Boston, the stories of their lives are resonating with readers. Edmund White's *Genet*, for instance, has already received the prestigious National Book Critics Circle Award for biography. Other finalists for the Lambda Literary Awards — including *Before Night Falls* by Reinaldo Arenas, *Marguerite Yourcenar* by Josyane Savigneau, and *Travels with Lizbeth*, by Lars Eighner — received front page Sunday *New York Times Book Review* notices.

"We are very pleased by the role the Lammys have played in bringing gay

and lesbian literature to widespread public attention," said L. Page "Deacon" Maccubbin, publisher of the *Lambda Book Report*, which sponsors the Lambda Literary Awards. In addition to Edmund White's *Genet*, Mark Doty's *My Alexandria* also won the National Book Critics Circle award for Poetry. And Tony Kushner's *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches*, a Drama finalist, has already won the Pulitzer Prize.

As in past years, fiction proved a strong category, with Lesbian Fiction finalist *Stone Butch Blues*, by Leslie Feinberg, also appearing in the Small Press category. The lesbian fiction finalists again raise the question of what is a lesbian book. Members of this year's Lambda Literary Award finalist committee expressed support for — and objections to — Jeanette Winterson's *Written on the Body*. Some thought that the ambiguity of the narrator's gender disqualified the book from being considered a lesbian novel; others said that the book only makes sense if the narrator is a woman, and the novel's central relationship thus a lesbian one. The other Lesbian Fiction finalists are *Sea of Light* by Jennifer Levin, *Women on Women 2* ed. by Joan Nestle and Naomi Holoch,

and *Home Movies* by Paula Martinac.

The Lambda Literary Awards have a three-tier selection process. A list of nominees is assembled from ballots sent in by readers; this year, nearly 400,000 ballots were distributed nationwide. The over 300 books nominated were narrowed down to five finalists in each category by a finalist committee that included gay and lesbian book professionals, members of the lesbian and gay press and the staff of the *Lambda Book Report*. Eighty-six judges, representing a broad cross-section of the entire lesbian and gay literary community, will select a single book in each category from among the finalists. This year, for the first time, there will be gender parity in the judges' panels for all combined lesbian and gay categories.

Award recipients will be announced at a gala banquet in Los Angeles on Friday, May 27, during the American Booksellers Association Convention at a location to be announced.

For further information about the awards program or banquet tickets, please contact *Lambda Book Report*, 1625 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20009-1013 or phone the Lammys Line (202/462-7924).



Clockwise: Rabbi Kahn in his Purim garb. Festive bimah scene. Purim partygoers. PHOTOS BY ETHAN AND JIM FRAZIN.



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